



CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



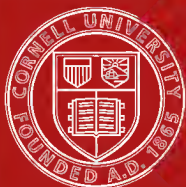
Cornell University Library  
**PR 2807.D26**

**Hamlet.Madame Roland. Lectures.By C.K. D**



**3 1924 013 137 595**

olin



Cornell University  
Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.





HAMLET.

MADAME ROLAND.

---

LECTURES.

---

BY

C. K. DAVIS.

---

ST. PAUL:  
THE PIONEER PRESS CO.  
1882.

FC

A 3674



# H A M L E T.

---

The English-speaking world long ago committed itself to the persuasion that humanity has its completest expounder in that marvellous man, who, like a magician working in the night, built in silence a great palace of thought, glorious with its pinnacles, its far-flashing lights, its halls of harmony, its festal rooms, its imperial arches; dreadful in its dungeons, its chambers of torture and its penitential cells—peopled it with undying occupants, and then departed, leaving less trace of himself, except as it is found in that eternal architecture, than a dream upon the memories of dawn.

But we know him in his works as we know the great Creator. The spacious firmament which he has spread showeth his handy-work. He dealt with good and evil. Man stands in that intellectual heritage in all his lordly dominance, and creeping things writhe through the multitude which he has made. All that he did is ministerial to man. His cloud-capped towers of imagination, the wildest efflorescence of his fancy, the perspective of his humour, which dilates into such grotesque proportions the shapes that walk therein, are merely

illustrative of man as he seemed to the greatest of men.

This fact has received universal recognition. He is the almoner of quotation, giving out his largess from a store which grows when fed on, and which increase of appetite does not waste. Wherever man considers himself, he is there. To find the other poets, we must go where they have been. To commune with Dante we pass through the portals of eternal sorrow. He says to us:

*Per me se va nella città dolente ;  
Per me se va nell' eterno dolore ;  
Per me se va tra le perdute gente.*

We find Milton in the same place, or seated, blind, like agonistic Samson, making sport for the Philistines among the pillars of the Restoration, and tugging to draw down the roof on all who sit beneath,

*Lords, ladies, captains, counselors and priests.*

We seek Burns in fields sweet with daisies, or in tap-rooms odorous of John Barleycorn. We find Shelley, a spirit enamored of a myth, brooding over some pallid, sculptured Ionian dream, and making it live and throb and move, speak and love, with all a mortal's ardor. We can say that we have met these men. It is felt to be a solecism to say that we have met Shakespeare. He is pervasive; he plays i' the element; he grows into our lives; he is a guide and friend, and he is more—

he is our double, who, instead of meeting us, goes along with us. We see our faces in his; his heart throbs in ours; his thoughts of what we really are in the secretest parts of our being are our self-consciousness, and seem somehow to be our own written confessions, which we have lost, and which he has found and given back to us confidentially.

He is the great circle which circumscribes human nature. Inscribed within that all-encircling periphery, are the minute and multitudinous lesser circles which comprehend the being of each person, containing whatever is personal and distinctive. He is the oracle of humanity—known to all men, but not as all men are known to him.

It is, therefore, worthy the attention to consider his greatest creation—as much his greatest as he is greater than any other of the sons of men. And here let me say that any assertion of originality of discovery would be deceptive affectation. The utmost result now attainable is originality of expression, and, I hope, a glimpse of details not hitherto fully observed. This favor can be accorded to the child even, who sees some mountain pinnacled in the heavens, dateless and changeless, which geologists have described, which poets have apostrophised, and filled from its fountains the urns of inspiration, which painters have depicted, and whose passes whole armies have traversed for thousands of years. We stand in a presence

before which Goethe was dwarfed; which baffled the inspired critical instinct of Coleridge; which was nearest comprehended by realistic Hazlitt, who identified it with humanity itself—not only with humanity at large, but with each individual of our race.

The Prince of Denmark has been studied by several critical generations. He has been examined in all his moods, and opinions concerning him still differ, just as opinions will differ concerning any living man.

The Hamlet we read rose upon the world about two hundred and eighty years ago. It was preceded by a first draft from Shakspeare's hand, and perhaps by an older play, not written by him; but these were heliacal, and were seen no more after the rising of the sun which sheds its rays upon us.

The play is founded upon a tragedy more harrowing than the catastrophe with which it ends, and it opens with one actor overwhelmed by the dreadful scene upon which the curtain has just fallen. The father of Hamlet has died by fratricide—stung to death, as it was given out, by a serpent, while sleeping in his garden. The brother has possessed himself of the throne by usurpation, and within two months after the death of the king has married his widow.

Hamlet, thrown by these events into the vortex of calamity, finds himself barred from the success-

sion by a cutpurse of the empire and the rule, and disgraced by the dexterity with which his mother posted to the marriage. Feeling all this, and suspecting in his prophetic soul the rottenness in the state of Denmark, his sorrow, indurated into melancholy, is attested by the inky cloak, and is denoted more truly by his avowal of that within which passeth show. It is while under the influence of such a tragedy, one act of which is daily played before him in the shame of his mother, that such a mind is brought into communion with the spiritual world. His father's spirit walks armed abroad, and in the chill of a northern night, upon the platform at Elsinore, his voice, solemnized by the midnight sea sounding many fathoms beneath, reveals to Hamlet the guilt of the uncle, and dedicates him to revenge. By that awful conference the varied purposes of the prince for his future are dislocated and shattered in a moment. All designs are wiped away from the tables of memory as trivial records, and the memory of the ghost is emblazoned thereon to live there ever after.

The dialogue given in the play is short, but by most exquisite implication it is clear that it lasted for the hours from midnight until the paling fires of the glow-worm showed the coming of the dawn. The imagination is left under the influence of conjecture as to what else there was of that discourse between the earthly son and the spectral

father, burning with his purgation of fire. What other disclosures did the phantom make? Was it a prophet, whose revelations gave to Hamlet that piercing insight into facts and motives which he afterwards displayed? Did it crush the hopes of the fair Ophelia in its ghostly hands? Did its adjurations, its revelations, and the duties which it laid upon the conscience of Hamlet, prove even then too much for that breaking heart, and convince him even then that his life must be a wreck; that he was to be his own fate; that fate which he so often afterwards hung back from, even while he heard it calling out and felt it dragging him forward to the brink of Ophelia's grave, to the poisoned cup, and the exchanged sword?

But few of the words are written which were spoken by our Lord during the forty days in which He walked the earth after the Resurrection; but that He did many signs, shewed many infallible proofs, and spoke of the things concerning His kingdom, is written, which, it is not to be doubted, gave to His followers that miraculous power of spiritual conquest which they immediately exhibited. The art of the play has here imitated the fact of the highest truth, by leaving more to conjecture than it has given to knowledge.

It is quite essential to any estimate of Hamlet to know of what age we must consider him. It has been thought that he was an immature youth,

just from the university. This opinion is grounded partly upon his greeting Horatio as just from Wittenberg. But it is to be observed that he does not speak to him as to a school-fellow. The king, it is true, expostulates against the intention of Hamlet to return to the university. But the expostulation is the expression of a desire simply, and not of a command; while the tone in which the mother expresses her wish is such as she would employ in persuading a son of mature years. Hamlet, though passed beyond his under-graduate days, may well have wished to seek the quiet solace of academic life in the enjoyment of what we may call a fellowship at the university. It is inferable from his greeting to the players that it has been a long time since he has seen them, whether at the university or during his free life in the unnamed city afterwards. It is true that Laertes speaks of his favor towards Ophelia as a violet in the youth of primy nature, but this is the vehement exaggeration of advice to a sister, and his language must be understood as meaning only that the nature of Hamlet is still crescent. The sexton expressly states Hamlet's age as thirty years, and the soliloquy of the prince over the skull of Yorick, with the answer given by the grave-digger that it is the skull of the jester, and that it has lain in the earth three and twenty years, show that Hamlet is in the very fullness of physi-

cal and intellectual life; that he is at that age when judgment and action go hand in hand. Ophelia deplores his mental overthrow as that of the courtier, scholar and soldier, and her language throughout implies that he is much her elder. His mother nowhere schools him, while he, on the contrary, assumes over her that pleasing and tender dominance of the mature man over his mother, which, in actual life, is one of the loveliest exhibitions of human nature paying back its debt.

Now the man of thirty years is not the same man he was before, or that he will be afterwards. Scholarly men, who are at once ambitious, amiable, imaginative and melancholic, find that this age dates an era. The fruit of life is in its fullest sweetness; it has been handled though, and some of its bloom has been brushed away by tarnishing hands. Hope still flies radiantly before, but she is often accompanied and vexed by her somber sister angel of disappointment. The realities of life are upon the man with all the force of their first onset. He makes estimates of the inherent nothingness of the unvalued treasures of youth. Love has, it may be, proved not eternal. Unbelief throws its shadow over the grave, and extinguishes the light beyond it. At times these brighten, and life, the future, eternity, become radiant with the visiting forms of early hopes and dreams. He walks an enchanted hall, where all seems fair and mas-



sive, and yet some of its pillars are granite, and some are rolled up mists; some of its denizens are real and warm, while others are shadows and dissolve in the embrace; some walk the happy paths, while others are sorrows older than the pre-adamite kings in Vathek, and wander there in silence, holding their hands over hearts of never-dying fire.

It is further to be remarked that Hamlet is the only character portrayed by Shakespeare which we do not understand, or at least affect to understand. We know Macbeth and his wife as guilty ambition—the woman with all the devil's unconquerable daring, the man with all a man's fitful yet remorseless resolution, kindled of hell by the power of hell's darling temptress. We know Richard and Iago: they are wickedness personified; the one gross and patent, the other gross, yet motiveless as the malice of some sexless monster created for another world than ours, with all man's intellect yet with none of man's human nature. We know Othello. He is a noble, brave and credulous man, duped by jealousy, who kills his wife, not in revenge, but all in the honor of justice, in whose tribunal he has presided in the agony of judgment. Lear is a more complex character, but we can see as plainly as if he were Diocletian or Charles that he is senile royalty, royally giving away his crown as if it were the plaything of his second childhood, and afterwards

roused to wrath by filial ingratitude, whence blaze up all the fires of his fierce and regal nature from the ashes in which they were dying, to consume him, children, kingdom, in one final conflagration.

In none of these does Shakespeare attempt to portray the whole of man. They are the mere incarnation of the passions which agitate them. Their masks taken off, and they are placid men and women who invite no study. Their human nature is shown no further than is necessary to illustrate or energize the master infirmity, trait or passion.

Hamlet is more than any of these; more than all of them considered together; for, so considered, they do not present one composite human nature. Hamlet is at first a man pure and simple. He has no master passion; he is not an impossibility; he is not a mere conception—he is an actual being. We never stand in amazement when we meet him as we do when we encounter the others, displaying the exaggeration of their partial traits in the marvellous and false, yet artistic perspective of the scene. We know that he is a man, with all his powers and weaknesses, destined to encounter the vicissitudes of life. We understand the others, but we cannot understand him, just as we can never fully know our most familiar friend. Apply this test to the daily companion of our life. We ask, why does he hesitate? We deplore that

superb powers of thought or action are unused by him through sheer inertness. He has done some act which we do not understand or try to understand—he must be crazy. We look for motives where none exist, and where the man is aimlessly drifting with the tide of life—he is acting a part. He fails in some duty which we officiously invent for him, and which has no existence outside our own impertinence—he is wicked. He falls by the wayside, overthrown, perhaps, by acts of doing good, which transcend our powers of estimation—we join the self-complacent rabble which treads upon his face. Some one writes his biography, and it is not his life.

The completeness of Hamlet's human nature accounts for the immense mass of literature which has been deposited over the play. No one is satisfied with the descriptions, and so every one digs down through the strata to look at the petrification itself. But, like a living man, it eludes definition, escapes limitation, surprises by unexpected caprices, and the heart of its mystery cannot be plucked out.

The fact that Hamlet is never acted as it is written is conclusive proof of this completeness of his character. I have always felt while seeing it thus presented that wrong is done it, being so majestic, to offer it the show of scenic and rhetorical violence. 'Tis here! 'tis there! and it finally

escapes our assaults, beckoning us the while to those remote regions of our nature, to look down precipices of awful depth, and to listen to the tumultuary roar of an angry sea, vaster than any ocean, containing more frightful wrecks and unvalued jewels than are held in that great deep into which men can go down in ships. It defies representation as a living man would. The stage Hamlet is a debatable personage, and the question is whether he is a heroic travesty or a slanderous caricature. To use the test just now applied. We cannot represent or describe our most familiar friend, or our most inveterate enemy. We depict him in his partial traits. So in the stage Hamlet we see the loiterer ranting over his duties unperformed, laying traps to catch the occulted guilt of the king, agonizing before the ghost in self-reproach, torturing his mother, baffling Polonius, and breaking Ophelia's heart. The display of his intellectual attributes is unlicensed by the chamberlains of the stage. He comes before us a prince of shreds and patches.

The fact that this play is Shakespeare's rewritten and most consummate work confirms these views, and, of course, deepens our interest in it. We can imagine how the ideal character grew to full stature and proportions under the hands of such a creator, and stepped from the stage and all of its tawdry regalia into the audience of actual

life. The editions show that Shakespeare rewrote the play and amplified it in those very particulars which are incapable to stage representation. The lines which Ben Jonson wished Shakespeare had blotted, were blotted in this work during the fifteen years in which the spirit of its creator brooded over it. Many of the sublimest passages appear for the first time in the latest revision. He doubtless meant to give this play to time as his most perfect production, and the result was that the most consummate playwright of any age made it incapable of representation as it is written. Men have so taken this work to themselves, and so identified themselves with it, that it is impossible not to believe that the man Shakespeare is here too. It is as if by a genetic effort he had gathered the crepuscular light of sorrow and hope which gleams in his sonnets, but which is made dim and unattractive by the planetary pageant which blazes amidst it, combined it with the master fragments of the plays and condensed them into a world of man.

He presents in Hamlet a being of pure intellect, who is also a man of moral purity. His other personal conceptions are embodiments of passions which wreak themselves in great actions. The work set before them to be done is done, or is, at the least, attempted. But Hamlet is simply an intellectual being, whose purposes come to naught

while he is loitering in his contemplations or is dragging the ball and chain of mental disorder. The preponderance of his mental faculties is such that he doubts and debates concerning the most unquestionable verities, and seeks for solutions of the most insoluble problems. He rouses himself at times from these reveries, and, seeing that in them he has drifted far away from his sworn purposes, unpacks his heart with words, but soon relapses into those dreams which adumbrate his life, and is floated slowly towards the occasion of the catastrophe which no design of his, except momentary impulse, has helped to produce. He is a soldier who does not fight, a courtier who plays no part at court, a scholar who simply muses. He is a prince, who, although he is

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,

suffers his royal inheritance to be filched from him without resistance or remonstrance even. The preparation for war against Norway does not interest him. He has no thought of appealing to the English appanage for aid to gain his kingdom. The mighty forces of warlike power and political craft, which in such ages as his are so freely used and are so ready to the hand, do not occur to him as instruments of his revenge. His dealings with the difficulties of his situation are those of small personal craft, and not of political sagacity. He cunningly manœuvres the players to assault the

conscience of the king, and likens his scheme to a mouse-trap. He departs quietly enough for England, and during the voyage unseals the packet to the vassal king, and by a substituted forgery compasses the death of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He comes back as infirm of purpose as he was before. Early in the events he asks these spies to play upon a pipe, and retorts upon their protestations of inability the question how they can then profess to be able to play upon him, that noble instrument of many pipes and stops and sources of harmony. Shakespeare has made him the great idealist, disturbed by the attack of facts. The outer world, "this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof, fitted with golden fires," appears to him "no other than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors." Man delights him not, nor woman neither. All these are like projections of his intellectual self. At the wave of the Prosper-wand of that reasoning imagination, they appear, and for a moment are, and then at another wave the revels end, and to him they truly cease to be. He alone remains. If his speculative powers compel him to assume the existence of the material world as the postulate of his own being, if he is at times feelingly persuaded by the counselors of sorrow of the influential existence of the immovable and cruel facts which beset him, it is for the moment only. To use the fine expression

of Keats, he soon becomes a shadow upon the skirts of human nature dwelling. These considerations are to be remembered when we come to consider what the condition of the mind of Hamlet was—whether it was sound or unsound. The conception, though unique in literature, is nevertheless a common character among men.

If we have thus attained a partial conception of the ultimate components of the character of Hamlet, by a precipitation of its foreign accidents, and found him to be a man of pure intellect, without moral taint, let us look at the result and see, if we can, what this mind, standing naked, yet nebulous, before us, finally became. Is it sound or unsound? Was Hamlet essentially mad, or mad only in craft?

I am firmly persuaded that the intellect of Hamlet had been disordered by his emotions long before he saw the ghost, and that the vision and its disclosures aggravated the disorder to actual mental unsoundness; that Shakespeare has here shown himself at the very height of his unapproachable power by producing one of the most intellectual of men, and at the same time, with a subtle delicacy and paradox of construction, as crafty as insanity itself, has tainted his creation with a characterization of insanity so profound, yet so elusive of detection, as to baffle exposure, like a wary lunatic, who knows that physicians have been set to watch him.



When we say that the constitution of Hamlet is purely intellectual, we say also that his reflective powers must have addicted him to self-communion of the most intense character—a habit which easily leads to brooding melancholy. He is so abstracted from the world and its concerns that he is nowhere presented as an actor in civic or military transactions. He longs to return to the university. His succession is taken from him, and he does not resist. His utter indifference to the temporal and real things which men so much desire, is so completely relied upon by his murderous uncle, that he is suffered to remain at the court, and for a long time no effort is made to exile, to employ or to conciliate him. The king never apprehends danger from him until he sees this princely monk emerge from the cloisters of his contemplative life, with disturbed mien and freakish vagaries.

I do not recall a maxim of policy or statecraft among all of Hamlet's sayings. He follows the dust of Alexander and Cæsar to their ultimate ignoble uses, but does not draw a single political inference from the swelling act of those imperial themes. His reflections have evidently schooled him to the belief that all that this world can give is nothing to that which life takes away in our very act of living. He is what the authorities on insanity term a melancholiac.\* Everyone counts in his experience some one who is thus afflicted.

This disorder is seldom permanent, but is generally a mood. It is that perversion of the mind which, though it will confess that it sees things as they are, reasons concerning them, and permits them to affect it as they are not; exaggerates them by a timorous fear of what they may become, sees them breeding whole armies of sorrows, which the man knows will surely conquer him, breaks out of the mood in spasms of sense, resolve and resistance, but relapses, and finally yields to them in advance, like a city which surrenders to a lying herald who announces the immediate presence of a host yet miles and miles away. We have these moods. Consult yourselves. They overcome us, not like summer clouds, but like the somber, dun eclipse, out of the gloom of which we cannot walk, and in which we must remain until this woe-peopled satellite of our being passes away from before the face of the sun of reason. We are led captive by fears. We distrust our friends. With our pockets full of money we are poor. We disparage our best intellectual performances. We readily agree with the sympathizing friend that these are delusions,—yes,—yes,—but they compass us round about again, and torment us while we are protesting our denials of their reality. We but puff a clear space for a moment in the mist which envelopes us.

When this becomes the fixed habit of the mind it is mental disease and the inducement to insanity

in its popular sense. Violent emotional changes, disappointed affections, loss of property or of reputation, come like giants to the front of the cares which beleaguer that man, storm the inner citadel of his being and rule him forever after. The equilibrium of the mind is destroyed by one heavy disaster. The mind then works with accuracy enough from postulate to conclusion, but the postulate is wrong. It works in one direction only, and that the wrong one. A writer has expressed this truth by stating that "in the prodromic (that is, the preliminary,) period of the disorder, the emotions are always perverted while the reason remains the same."

Now, Hamlet suffered several shocking emotional experiences. The death of his father, the wicked marriage and self disgrace of his mother came first. These were followed by his father's apparition and its awful disclosures. These produced another influence equally potent to unpoise the intellect. Ophelia must be nothing more to him. She perishes in the destruction of that noble mind like the picture of a saint seen through the windows of a burning sanctuary. If we add to these facts the loss of a kingdom, we have massed against this melancholy and scholastic intellect every sorrow which could assault it, and coming, not in troops, but in battalions. What themes these were for that saddened subtilty which could muse

so abstrusely over the dust of dead clowns, ladies, lawyers, kings: which could pause in those supremest moments of life in which instantaneous action is demanded by the instinct of self-preservation, to introspect its own infirm processes with self-reproaches which worked no amendment! Well, and with intuitive correctness of definition has he been called "the melancholy Dane"! Here is the "insane root," of which he ate, and which "took his reason prisoner."

When we apply these tests to the action of the play we find the results we should expect. It is characteristic of melancholy men to tempt and become familiar with the idea of suicide. Standing in the long and narrow aisle of life, they see before them nothing else but all its cares defacing hope, and the dust of an opened, longed for and waiting grave, heaped up at the end, which seems too distant: at hand so near that they can touch its latch at any minute, and with its key can feel how simple the wards are, and how smoothly its bolt turns is the side-door of exit by their own hand. They may not open it. They probably will not, but they knock at it often, and listen at it to hear if there is aught beyond, and then go on and *exeunt omnes* with the others of their generation. It may happen that some sorrows more appalling than the others of that awful sisterhood, armed

With the strange might of imagined pains,  
The powers who scheme slow agonies in hell—

may frenzy one into making his exit before his time. The reason, a maniacal king, then tortures his subject to death.

Now Hamlet, while he was supposed by everybody to be merely sorrowing for his father's death, to be in the shadow of transient clouds, and persistent in a grief particular to him after the others had performed their mourning duties, was in communion with the idea of suicide. His griefs seemed to him greater than he could bear. Great as they were, his melancholy had magnified them to the proportions to which delusions always dilate. He had turned from them in fear, and stood within the portal where the Stoic becomes an Epicurean at last. The world was to him "an unweeded garden;" its uses "were weary, stale, flat and unprofitable;" he longed for annihilation, to be resolved into a dew, and deplored the canon of the Everlasting against self-slaughter. We shall see hereafter how this dalliance with suicide recurs after his father's spectre appeared to him, and that it is then renewed with a greater and more unhallowed intimacy than when he courted it under the sole agency of paternal loss and maternal disgrace. Up to that time he knew only that his father was dead and that his mother had depraved herself, not only unnaturally, but also

in violation of the canons of the Catholic church, for it has been remarked by an acute critic that what there is of creed in this play is Catholic throughout, such as the prohibition of marriage with the husband's brother, the abiding place of the king in purgatorial fires, the burial of Ophelia with maimed rites, tolled to her burial with bell, it is true, but denied

— a requiem and such rest to her  
As to peace-parted souls.

A second ally in this confederacy of woes appears in the ghost, and from this time the melancholy of Hamlet darkens, and he breaks into frequent incoherencies of action and speech. Here is the physical accessory to the moral causes which have been at work for a long time in disintegrating this royal intellect. The writers upon insanity maintain that this combination precipitates the mind to a lower depth, and causes it to betray its disorder by insane aberrations. The man is then insane. The degree matters not. Had Hamlet killed the king, and been tried for high treason, he would have been acquitted upon the principles which Erskine established in the English law by his speech in the defense of Hadfield, who attempted to shoot George the Third.

Let us here group by quotation the diagnostic facts of this kind of insanity as laid down by writers of acknowledged authority. "When all

the faculties are swallowed up in one overwhelming emotion, there can be no more hesitation respecting the pathological state." "The patient is painfully conscious of the nature of his malady; he not only knows that he is insane, but will seldom attempt to conceal his consciousness thereof from any considerate and sympathizing inquirer." "The fear of suicide, and the possibility of preventing it, is that which here gives value to a positive diagnosis." "Short periods occur in the course of the disorder in which the symptoms verge upon those of mania." "Two or three sleepless nights occur, the patient becomes irritable and restless, and talks on the subject of his grief with vehemence; he soon, however, relapses into the dull and languid monotony of his former condition." "Melancholic patients will, however, not only conceal but sometimes deny their delusion." "The man who is merely feigning madness betrays the deception by an over-acted and outrageous absurdity of conduct." Monteggia had a case where he was of the opinion "that actual dementia had resulted from long feigning." "Among the earliest physical symptoms are insomnia and disturbed dreams \* \* \* the dread of falling asleep is intensely agonizing from the anticipation of dreaming and awaking with horrible sensations." "The patient is afraid he will lose his mind; it constitutes the preliminary

stage of suicidal insanity." "The subject of it loses his relish for existence; he feels depressed and unequal to the ordinary duties which call him into public life." "When unfavorable action from without conspires with an infirmity of nature from within, the conditions of the disorder are established, and a discord or madness is produced." "In pure melancholia the intellectual faculties are not involved; it presents the most indubitable example of emotional insanity." "It is frequently preceded by a period of general mental excitement, and in many cases short periods occur during the course of the disorder in which the symptoms verge upon those of mania." "That madmen may give out that they are merely feigning insanity to accomplish a logical purpose is a very common occurrence." "The melancholic seeks solitude."

We shall see that the mental condition of Hamlet quadrates with these symptomatic facts. He is a solitary. Horatio has been at Elsinore for two months, and yet Hamlet evidently sees his dearest friend for the first time when they await the ghost upon the platform.

Hamlet is addicted to minute speculative thought upon topics irrelevant to the occasion, even when the occasion is a crisis in his life. He botanizes among the flowers and weeds which grow upon the battle field of his life. While waiting for the



ghost he delivers to Horatio and Marcellus that noble, yet anachronous homily upon those flaws which may disvalue the best of men, and which is at the same time a reading upon his own mental alienation.

So oft it chances in particular men,  
That for some vicious mole of nature in them,  
As in their birth, (wherein they are not guilty,  
Since nature cannot choose his origin,)  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;  
Or by some habit which too much o'erleavens  
The form of plansive manners; that these men,  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Being nature's livery or fortune's star,  
Their virtues else (be they as pure as grace,  
As infinite as man may undergo,)  
Shall, in the general censure, take corruption  
From that particular fault.

Hamlet's faculties are o'ergrown by a complexion which has broken down the pales and forts of reason; they are all swallowed up in an overwhelming emotion, thus presenting one of the indubitable tests above stated. They were nearly all thus absorbed before the ghost appeared, but after that their absorption became complete. It was thence not gradual, but was the instantaneous result of a shock in that early dawn which warned away the phantom of the king. Hamlet then and there wipes away from the tables of his memory

— all trivial, fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there.  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmix'd with baser matter.

He confirms this resolution with a vow, and seals it with a prayer and "so be it." In this instantaneous dedication of himself to a life-long purpose, he displays in the very act the most subtle forethought. He baffles the solicitude of Horatio with persiflage, and afterwards appeals in the most solemn manner to the honor of his companions, as gentlemen, to promise, and to hallow that promise with a vow, that they will never make known what they have seen.

It is very apparent from the advice given by Laertes to his sister Ophelia, and from what afterwards occurred, that the love which the prince bore towards this most fragrant flower of womanhood was very great, and that it pencilled with one long, radiant yet narrow gleam, the cloud which hung upon him. Now, insane melancholy will make men forget love: or put it by for a time, take it up again, put it by, and again take' it up, so often as to wear it down to a tender and attenuated regret. This is precisely what occurs here. Ophelia is sent slowly whirling at first around the extreme edge of that awful northern maelstrom, is drawn to its center by the forces of those

dreadful spirals of grief, to be sucked down utterly at last into its dark vortex, never to appear again until cast up to drift, shattered, yet lovely, heavenward over the eternal sea.

Within a very short time after the scene upon the platform, Hamlet appears before her in garb, in gesture and in action, the very impersonation of a mind possessed by one controlling and ecstatic emotion. That he is changed to a man of one mood is apparent to all persons about him. To the king it is a "transformation." To his mother he is her "too much changed son."

The symptom of consciousness of his malady is not wanting. Again and again he questions the reality of the vision which he has seen. He piteously pleads before Laertes that it was his own distraction, his madness; that it was the warring faction of insanity—Hamlet's enemy—and not Hamlet, which killed Polonius and crazed Ophelia.

The idea of suicide presents itself much more persuasively than it did at first. He now actually meditates self-slaughter. To be or not to be becomes *the* question. His first utterance upon that subject was a wish that it were forbidden by God. In his second communion with the topic the religious restraint does not influence him, but he is withheld by an argument which is demonstrative of his mental alienation, for "insomnia, disturbed dreams, and intensely agonizing dread

of falling asleep, from the anticipation of dreaming, and awaking with horrible sensations," are, as we have seen, among the earliest symptoms of such mental disorder as we are attributing to Hamlet. That he was thus afflicted, abundantly appears. He exclaims:

"O, God! I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have had bad dreams." The terrorizing fury of his life, this dread of sleep and dreams, is the countercheck to the assault which the impulse to commit suicide makes upon him. To sleep the sleep of death, and dream are more terrible than the miseries of life, because even in death he fears that he must suffer under the broodings of its everlasting visions.

—— To die,—to sleep !

To sleep ! perchance to dream—aye, there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
*Must* give us pause.

How wonderful is this fear, how dreadful this delusion! That death is a dreamful sleep. That our fretful, little life there finds no rest, but is cast upon a limitless, heaving ocean of agony. That there there can be no awakening into miseries which, though awful, are, by contrast, balm and peace to the soul, tortured by those eternal trances of sorrow and horror, by those visions which

unroll from everlasting to everlasting, which the will does not evoke and cannot exercise.

The argument with which he thus refutes his desire is not only the symptom of insane melancholy, but is also a negation of all religious belief, consolation or restraint, and is a delusion which makes the grave, not the garden of resurrection, but the bed of eternal, anarchic and dreaming sleep.

Let us contrast two personages who have been presented to us dramatically—Hamlet as given to us by Shakespeare, and Socrates by Plato. Socrates, the soundest intellect of all men, showed that his massive mind stood plumb on its foundations, by arguing in the *Phaedo* against suicide just before he drank the hemlock. He also argues in the *Apologia*, before his judges, that if the soul be not immortal, and if he shall not after death talk with Orpheus, Musæus, and Hesiod and Homer, nor with Telamonian Ajax or Agamemnon or Ulysses,—if death be merely sleep, still it is preferable to life, for in his sleep of death *no* dreams will come, while Hamlet, whom Shakespeare has endowed with speculative powers of Socratic subtlety, fears death, and holds it more horrible than the woofullest life, because in that everlasting sleep dreams will engender through all eternity.

We also see in Hamlet the recurrence of those short periods in the course of his disorder, during

which he is actually maniacal. Immediately after the ghost vanishes from the platform, and as a revulsion from that strain of thought wherein he dedicates himself to revenge, he commits the trivial and inconsequent act of setting down the platitude that one may smile and smile and be a villain, at least in Denmark—"so uncle, there you are." This quiet act is the *rigor mortis* of a dead reason. The silly explanation given his friends immediately thereafter, that "there's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark but he's an arrant knave" are the "whirling words," which betray incoherency of thought. His demeanor towards Ophelia at their first meeting is that of dementia. His conversation with Polonius, and his letter to Ophelia, are not feignings; they are incoherencies. That solemn and stately meditation upon suicide is checked—perhaps the deed is checked—by his coming upon Ophelia at her orisons, and at once there is an intervention of incoherency which is filled with that rhapsody of discourtesy so subtly tempered withal with love wailing over its lost object, which causes her to implore the sweet heavens to help him, to restore him, and makes her mourn over the overthrow of that mind blasted with ecstasy. So in the church-yard, his melancholy reasons over mortality, with expressions, whose funereal stateliness is not surpassed by Jeremy Taylor or by Sir Thomas Browne, but

when he learns by the pathetic prayer of Laertes, adjuring that violets may spring from the fair and unpolluted flesh of her who is thus brought home with bell and burial, and her maiden strewnments only, that it is the fair Ophelia who is brought to tenant the narrow house, he raves, and, in the language of his mother, to whom such scenes seem familiar,

— awhile the fit will work on him.  
Anon, as patient as the female dove,  
When that her golden couplets are disclosed,  
His silence will sit drooping.

The authorities declare that “melancholic patients will not only conceal but sometimes deny their delusions.” We find Hamlet denying his condition to his friends at the very outset. The ghost has just vanished, and before Hamlet has had time to form the complex plan of feigning madness for the purpose of revenge, while he is still shocked to the very center of his intellectual and emotional being, while he feels his mind giving way, and knows that its ruin must be suspected immediately, as it was suspected, he announces his intention to put an antic disposition on.

This is “insanity simulated by an unsound mind.” The reports of the criminal law abound in cases of this character, where persons, unquestionably alienated from their minds, have feigned a supererogatory insanity, sometimes for purposes

of defense, in anticipation and as an accessory to the act for which the real insanity is a sufficient defense. The same remarks are true concerning his assertions of his sanity to the spies and to his mother. Polonius, the aged counselor, and the most experienced man at the court, has no doubt of Hamlet's insanity, and that Polonius, senile though he was, was rich in the fruits of observation, thoroughly appears. He describes the stages of the declension of the prince into insanity in terms which medical authorities admit are scientifically accurate. He

Fell into a sadness; then into a fast;  
Thence to a watch; thence into a weakness;  
Thence to a lightness; and by this declension,  
Into the madness wherein now he raves.

Horatio nowhere gives any opinion upon this question. His silence was demanded by what he had seen and the promise he had made, for a word from him would have called for a full disclosure. The fact that he, at no time, even in soliloquy, declares his friend sane, when lover, mother, friends and enemies declare him mad, is that silence, by one who is bound to speak, which the law of evidence considers affirmative testimony by reason of acquiescence in the asserted and apparent fact.

It is true that Hamlet often insists that he is not mad. So do all insane persons. It is their great grievance to be so considered. Their explan-



ation that they are feigning insanity for a purpose is not an unusual one, and it is a very obvious piece of craft. Even in the scene where he balks the treacherous curiosity of the spies by asserting that his uncle-father, and aunt-mother are deceived concerning his madness, he admits the fact, as lunatics often will in their most plausible arguments of denial. He concedes that he is mad at times, and uses the well-known supposition of the influence of atmospheric conditions to account for his intermittent distemper.

In his interview with his mother he denies his madness; but when did any person of unsound mind, craftily following a purpose, fail to do that in the supreme moment when that purpose is being accomplished upon its object? It is generally upon irrelevant and collateral occasions that the infirmity stands self-confessed. Many insane persons are so at times only, and under the influence of provocative causes. So wonderfully balanced are we that a word, an odor, a reminiscence, a thought, may unpoise us. The test to which he challenges his mother is declaratory of his mood at that moment. He would gambol from the matter, and could not, and would not, propose to reword it in those scenes of incoherency to which reference has been made.

When to all this is added the fact that in cases of emotional and melancholic insanity the intel-

lectual faculties are not destroyed, but are so far implicated in the disorder that they cannot save the patient, but lend their aid to his alienation, and do this sometimes knowingly, yet with no power to move the will to resist the confederacy, it cannot well be doubted that Hamlet was an insane person within the strictest definitions.

The catastrophe indicates that Shakespeare intended to so represent him. Had he been sane, the dying close of this tragedy would have brought happiness to him and retribution to the guilty only. But Shakespeare so enmeshed Hamlet in the web of his madness that the drama was enforced to end as it does end. His father murdered, his mother depraved, the woman he loved crazed and dead, himself mad, and so declared by all the world, it was not within the compass of even Shakespeare's art to give the kingdom to Hamlet, and make him reign long and happily with a beauteous queen and a royal stock of children. Even the Promethean hand of the Master could not call back to that wasted and darkling sun the rays of reason from the infinite chaos of distraction which they illuminated, at once engendering and disclosing its horrors, and relume that orb with the light of its morning. And so guilt and innocence are swept away together to their last resting place, and an alien sits upon the throne of Denmark.

We have been observing Hamlet as if he were real. Marvellous art of the magician! To sway us with a shadow, a shadow's love, a shadow's grief, a shadow's intellect, and the madness of a shade! To make this phantom not only what it is as such, but to make its phantom mind a problem forever!

For this Hamlet, whom we know, never was. The past held him not, nor shall we meet him "in the court of Heaven." He moldered with the creative brain under the chancel of Stratford church.

But after all is he unreal? What is reality in such cases? The fleshliest incubus is real. The grossest prince who lives and dies is an actual being. But, for this earth, his reality ends with his death. Seldom does a vibration from him reach much beyond his generation. A few years, and no one hears him. As well lay the ear over his grave to listen to his soliloquies. Not so this ideal prince. He stands to-day appareled in imperial robes, not a statue, but regnant over each successive generation; not shunned like the wandering Jew, but loved and obeyed and pitied. His kingdom widens as the years pass by. He sets up his monarchy in empires and republics alike; in Indian cities to survive their gods, in Australasian continents and islands. Ships gliding over lonely seas keep his state. He sways the

mind in the long winters of arctic horror and in African deserts.

Is he not then a most enduring reality? No other character in literature has this omnipresence and immortality. Why is this so? It is because Hamlet is man, and he is every man. He is kept alive by all men by self-recognition. He, calm and impassive, now that his bitter experience is all over, can tell us what we are. We see in him our inmost parts, our grossest attributes, our most evanescent spiritualities. His is our life, and we see "what a piece of work is a man."

We come face to face with life. There it is all stretched before us, so beautiful to see that we cannot think it has an end. But from the very dew and flowers of our spring exhales a poison which blasts us forever—and we are Hamlet.

Life goes on, but our great purposes are beaten down by some malign force; the diadems of success with which we crown ourselves burn upon our brows and consume us; our wills become infirm; we palter with our duties; we resolve that we will act the part of men, but fail to do so in the very midst of our resolutions—and we are Hamlet.

We are snatched up by some convulsion, and are hurled to and fro as if the powers of the air were making their devilish sport with us in the coldest regions of upper darkness—and we are Hamlet.

Love, Paphian at once and pure, comes towards us like a dawn, caroling with all the music of the morning, garlanded and bearing wreaths of all the flowers. But even as she reaches forth her embracing arms, her face wans, her eye darkles, her mind wanders away, the song becomes a dirge, the flowers fade, and she hands us fennel and rue, rosemaries for remembrance and pansies for thought, all withered—and we are Hamlet.

And then *we* change. Melancholy claims us. God alone knows us and pities us. We make delusions our familiars and our home is darkness; life ends with no purpose accomplished, ourselves a riddle—and we are Hamlet to the grave.



MADAME ROLAND.





## MADAME ROLAND.

---

The field of history is so vast that the student derives his completest instruction from biographies. They epitomize eras, they raise the dead and make us enjoy or suffer with those who long ago passed away. They are to history what battle fields are to geography—the decisive places where examples of all that man can do or suffer are crowded into a little tract, there to be immortalized.

We are all, at our best, fiction makers. No one reads history by the true perspective. We idealize as well what is commonplace and near as that which is strange and far away. With biographies we can indulge this realistic dreaming to its full extent. When we see thus impersonated an era or an event, the

— colors gay of old Romance

shoot through the sober tissue of fact, tapestry it with that which never was, and yet which might have been, and instead of verity produce an ideal which is perhaps the highest type of history; because, besides declaring what has been done, it also shows what was possible.

Failures find here splendid compensations. We can see how great genius and great patience ought to have prevailed, although they did not, over the accidents by which they were wrecked, and so in after days they become as exemplary as if their success had been consummate. They thus outlive cotemporary censure, are praised by posterity for what they deserved, instead of pitied for what they suffered, or blamed for their faults, and reaching from olden tombs their spectral arms, sway events which were too strong for them in the days when they were on earth.

In this tendency to consider events by knowing the persons who were involved in them, exists a test of a most interesting subject. As astronomers measure the spaces of the sky by the micrometer, so the achievements and capacity of nations or classes are often estimated by what individuals thereof have accomplished. And in these days, when the capacity of woman for affairs is vehemently asserted by powerful thinkers, while by others it is earnestly objected that there inhere in her sex organic traits which not only unfit its members for such duties, but which, if given full scope, would create an incurable discord in civil administration; when from all points of view the question has been forced upon every thoughtful person, whether as regards her personal liberty, her right to property, to employment in industrial

pursuits, and to the exercise of political functions, her history is not one long story of unpalliated injustice—the life of a woman who acted a large part in scenes of greatest exigency, with or in opposition to men of greatest capacity, and of greatest contrasted goodness and depravity; a woman who suffered to the last extreme in the most frightful struggle which humanity ever made against authority, and in which the power of the individual was often greater than armies, than the hierarchy, than the laws, than all these put together and warring against him—such a life is instructive, not only upon the history of that time, but also upon those other problems now pressing for practical solution.

And it will also bear upon these topics if the characteristics and deeds of other influential women receive such incidental reference as may be consistent with the limitations of such an occasion as this.

The assemblage is most grotesque. Women appear with women whom no old social formula could ever have brought into contact. In the great shipwreck, the wife, the harlot, the actress, the nun, the queen, stand together, and they seem to have often exchanged characteristic traits.

The application of the careers of these women to the political and social questions of which I have spoken cannot be refused. It suggests many questions, doubts and misgivings.

It asks why it is that we see in every land, in every age, great political and social agitations saddened in heart-rending tragedies by

Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand  
The downward slope to death?

Are these frightful immolations simply personal calamities, or are they the manifestations of a law which converges upon a woman when she leaves her home to lead armies, to counsel states, to execute measures, reprisals against which her sex has never been a plea for mercy, but rather always an apparent pretext for their execution? Do the reasons for this inhere in our nature, or are they the mere monstrosities of institutions and usage?

These heroines come with dance and song of welcome to greet triumphant revolutions, like the daughter of Jephthah from Mizpach, and then Fate gives them over to martyrdom as if to fulfill a vow. Their lives are the rubric of history, for they are written in blood. With what touching monodies all literature has ministered at the exequies of this sisterhood of sorrow! They sadden the dawn of time, and cry out for aid and rescue from every recess of the past. By the dark-ribbed ships at Aulis sweet Iphigenia feels the knife. Perpetua gazes upwards from the arena, and sees beyond the silken firmament of that hell, her Redeemer, bending from Heaven to take her as his bride. Hypatia, deserted by all Olympus,

and appealing in vain to Christ, stands naked in the church, gleaming for a moment like a statue of purest ivory, and is then shattered and rent to pieces by monks. Forgotten, but for her, are fierce Talbot and cruel Beauvais, but the face of Joan of Arc will shine forever from her cowl of flame. Scottish Mary, child of sorrow, genius, suffering and sin, stands monumental in the hall of Fotheringay, all her ambition, her loving, her poetry and her music brought down to this, carrying into her grave a sorrow so epical that it will sadden hearts forever, mourned in disconsolate ballads, bewailed in stately poems, sorrowed for in romantic history and in historical romance.

And last and greatest martyr of them all, a modern woman, and yet of antique grandeur of proportion, beautiful, learned and good, Madame Roland rises in immortal transfiguration upon the scaffold the last sad martyr by whom this sorrowful problem is expressed.

We shall also catch glimpses of some of those Titanic men who shouldered the world aside and affronted Heaven itself to make way for their own conceptions.

It was an age when individuals asserted themselves against laws. Mankind went by violent and sanguinary retroversion back to their natural and imprescriptible rights. The concrete institutions against which man in his personality revolted,

were overloaded with cruelty, disparity and injustice, and the revolt was the most destructive of order, life and property that the world has ever seen. It was not only a revolution, it was a retribution also. The masses looked everywhere for leaders against constituted authority, and leaders were not wanting. Men came from the nobility, from the clergy, from the lawyers, from the shops, from the furrow, from the stables. Women came from the homes, from the palace, from the nunnery, from the bagnio, and by the fierce heat of that consuming collision, the fusion was like that effected by the lava of Vesuvius, which rolled and melted together in the streets of the Roman cities, the warrior's helmet, the scholar's stylus, the gladiator's trident, the woman's necklace, and the baby's toy.

No accidental collocation of events acting reciprocally produced all this. The hoarded wrongs of centuries came forth with retributory force. The hoarded wisdom of all the ages fought its way to institutional recognition. The martyrs of all time revived and spoke from the stake, the cross, the scaffold and the rack. The very laws of time seemed as fully abrogated as were the social distinctions of the moment. Men walked the streets of Paris from Plutarch's pages, from Suetonius' and Tacitus' direful chapters of cruelty. All that had ever been great, all that had ever been little,

all that had ever been merciful, all that had ever been cruel, found personal exponents, who not only showed themselves, but who also wielded the instrumentalities of power and action.

The reign of Louis XIV was essentially the most perfect despotism of modern times. His control over the lives and property of all his subjects, of whatever rank, was perfectly unrestrained. He was the State, and for nearly two generations the imperious will of this man, who was not great or just or benignant, wasted the intellectual and physical substance of France in that splendid and hollow pageant which bedizened his reign. Aggressive abroad, he was repressive at home. It was in many respects a reign of forms, and not of substance. Of these insubstantial forms, those of formal religion worked with resistless power, palsied the active forces of conscience, buried free thought in dungeons, and stifled them by ritualistic precepts. With his death ceased the long incantation which had emblazoned France with scenic glory, and the pompous greatness which it had evoked vanished like a shadow.

He was succeeded by the most abandoned wretch that ever shamed a crown. His reign is one long record of unspeakable indecency. But with the libertinism of the king and his court came the emancipation of those forces which ever work for human good. History turns from him

in disgust where his memory forces itself upon the attention by its never-ending rot, even as his courtiers left his corpse when it lay one confluent ulcer, and greets the resurrected forms of thought and freedom which rise from their graves in crowds.

About the middle of the last century France all at once travailed with intellectual labors of every kind. There was not a province subject to human thought which was not invaded and overrun. The abstract rights of man were asserted. Patristic theology was challenged. Science spurned forever the trammels of the church, considered everything from the infusoria in a tear to

Spidery Saturn in his webs of fire,

and rose, as on an archangel's wing, to higher and wider flights than it had compassed in all the centuries gone before.

The science of political economy was then made for the first time influential, and men were taught that the prosperity of nations lies not in the wisdom or the will of kings, but in laws as definite as those which sway the tides in their seasons.

The State and the Church had theretofore been holy, but they, too, were subjected to that destructive analysis by which the human intellect threatened to dissolve everything. Voltaire attacked the Church, attacked Christianity, attacked all creeds, until the nation became athe-



istic in its tendencies, if not in fact. He did not attack the State. But cotemporary with him lived one whose blows were so persistent and powerful upon the social and political structure that it reeled beneath them. Rousseau mined the very foundations of civil government and social organization, as Voltaire had attacked the foundations of the ecclesiastical polity.

These men acted in a most spacious theater. They were not mere students, speaking through books to a few; they were the demagogues of free thought, declaiming in its forum. To read their writings, to discuss their propositions, to attack whatever existed, were the task or amusement of every class of society. From the meanest peasant to the stateliest court lady every mind in the kingdom was under the influence of that skeptical and destructive leaven. It resulted from all this that all institutions, no matter how hoary with the sanction of immemorial prescription, were subjected to individual judgment, and in that war of theories, in that current of crude speculation which was violently forcing its way to calmer waters, every social structure tottered and rocked as if it were built on waves.

It also followed that if individuals had the right to pass judgment against an offending state, creed or usage, they had the right in some collective capacity to execute their sentence, and at once the

kingly prerogative, the sacerdotal power and the social usages lost that awe-inspiring charm which they had possessed for so many ages.

Louis XV was succeeded by an abstractly virtuous king, who was the husband of a woman irreproachable as to the major morals, but open to criticism as to those minor morals which women may lack and still be residuarily good, and good enough in this way she was.

But they had succeeded to a doomed city, to a rotten navy, to a collapsed army, to a debauched church, to a discontented people, to a bad state of morals—all of which was remediless by any surgery that they knew how to apply.

For the people were most wretched. One hundred years of taxation, of wars, of domestic oppression, had reduced them so low that the very soil, instead of sustaining life, fought to take it. Superimposed was stratum after stratum of privileged classes, the members of a wide-spread royal family, the nobility, the clergy, who reached down to the patient mass which bore them up, and, heedless of its agony and bitter complaints, drew from it its very substance.

During this time the American Revolution took place. It was the embodiment of the ideal which had been created in the French mind. Here, they exclaimed, here, in the depths of trans-atlantic forests, upon a continent which the God of Nature

has reserved, untouched, to be the scene of man's noblest work, is to be tested the truth of that which we have been taught and which we believe: let us arise and help the youthful giant of the western world!

So overpowering was this sentiment, so thoroughly did it permeate all ranks, even to royalty itself, that the world witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of a king in theory almost, and in practice wholly absolute, spending millions of treasure and thousands of lives in aid of a rebellion which was really an attack upon every principle by which he won his crown.

And when those chivalrous men came back from across the sea, and announced that they had helped to establish a government without bishop or king, a community where the individual enjoyed more limitless rights than those with which the ideal man had been invested by the dreams of Rousseau, the minds of the most speculative and changeable nation of modern times at once subjected their own institutions to the test enough to see that here was a solvent which would reduce them all. Everyone enjoyed visions of things about to be. They saw spread out before them a beautiful mirage of social equality, of perfect justice, of millennial peace. They leaned towards the illusion, and invoked the champions with which it was peopled, never thinking that it was

very distant, never thinking of the desert wastes which stretched between, strewn with the bones of nations which had perished in its sands.

It was at this time when the corruptions of the clergy were such that men lost faith in God; when the corruptions of the rulers were such that men ceased to respect government; when the illusions created by immemorial prescription were vanishing fast away; when the people, with timorous steps, invaded for the first time the precincts of misrule, and found that, after all, they were not haunted by forbidding spirits or guarded by anything but phantoms; when they stood face to face with disenchantment, and tore to pieces the dummies of which they had been afraid; when they were gathering rage from the sense of detected imposture, injustice and imposition, that they began to look for leaders to marshal them further.

Of the nobility, they were of course distrustful. In the bourgeoisie, always a timorous body, they had little to hope. It was not time for trained soldiers to join them, for they do not often come to the support of revolutions until after they have emerged triumphant out of successful insurrections. But the necessity for prompt action was urgent, and leaders came to the front by elective processes, which were impalpable until the result had been declared by the assertion of mastery. Sex or rank mattered little. The woman who

could condense the situation into an apophthegm, and direct it by a phrase, was invested at once with the regalities of command. The result of this was extreme crudeness of thought, enforced by great energy of action, which dislocated the frame of things here and there over and over again until it was finally completely pulverized.

It is to be remarked in passing, that of all the classes the lawyers furnished the greatest number of these controlling spirits, and nothing so completely proves the utter subversion of precedent and of the conservative tendencies imparted by training as the fact that these men of formulas and precedent—men of whom Robespierre and Danton are the type—stabbed deeper and bloodier into the heart of old abuses than the sword of the soldier was able to reach. But this is not surprising. The tendency of masses is to formulate events into principles. These men saw every precedent abolished, every dictum scouted, every decision overruled, every judgment reversed, every constitutional principle subverted, leaving them nothing but the tendency of their minds to supply that which had been annihilated, and which they knew could not be restored, and they accordingly drew from the experience of other ages, from classic antiquity, from the United States, from the myths of Teutonic freedom, from Utopia, from metaphysical dreams and socialistic

rhapsodies, new constitutions, instinct with freedom, but most cruel and bloody in their executive processes.

I said that the recent example of the United States was set by these people before themselves. This is true, both in a general and a special sense. Thomas Jefferson was then our minister at that Court, and it is certain that his influence upon the earlier events of the Revolution was very impressive. His home was the place of meeting of the French officers who had served in America, and these men were the darlings of the hour. During the period when the popular desire would have been satisfied by a constitutional government under the monarchy, his instructions and corrections were constantly solicited by those who had first entered upon that field never before trodden in France. He gave prelections from American and English law books. That restless and prolific agitator furnished the text of the law which established the right of trial by jury; he supplied the books, and wrote an argument by which it was justified. He sustained the ministry against an attack by Mirabeau, by an exculpatory letter which coerced from that vehement will a retraction and an apology. When the first constitution was under discussion, its success was imperilled by the proposition of the nobility that it should confer the right to veto upon the king, and should

create also a class of hereditary legislators. So radical was the popular sentiment that it threatened to wreck the whole scheme by its opposition to these measures. Jefferson, mindful of the impropriety of any palpable interference by him in the work of changing the form of the State, to which he was accredited, nevertheless invited to dinner the most radical supporters and opponents of these measures, and that occasion was the cause of a discussion in which he was appealed to. The result was a compromise of convictions, and it was agreed that the king should exercise a suspensive veto, and that there should be no hereditary legislators. It was also agreed that there should be but one legislative body. The next morning he went to the minister of foreign affairs to explain informally what had taken place, and found that that officer knew it already, and he was earnestly requested by the minister to habitually attend such conferences, in the hope that his practical experience would moderate the counsels and limit the desire of the aggressive radicals to the securing of attainable reforms. This is nearly all that is positively recorded of his interposition. The most communicative of all our statesmen is singularly reticent upon this most important period of his own and of the world's life. Possibly he was unwilling to file in the archives of history a full confession of his com-

plicity with those events which constantly forced the men who caused them into the perpetration of such enormous crimes.

This, then, was the temper of the people, and such was the tendency of thought and desire. A great drama was drawing to a close. The forces of retributive justice were bearing a nation to the final catastrophe, and it came, as if in fulfillment of the apocalyptic vision, by angel after angel of wrath, agony and punishment, emptying his vials upon the land.

“And there were voices and thunders and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon this earth so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the bitterness of his wrath.”

The measures of conciliation offered by the government always came too late. The nobility, with all their vast possessions, were practically untaxed. The church, which held its vast possessions in the dead man's clutch of mortmain, was untaxed. Together there were nearly two-thirds of the landed property of France. Exhaustive systems of taxations made the other third sterile. This had been so for a long time, but it finally came to pass that the government could borrow



nothing. Sagacious capital saw that the security was valueless. Wise men like Turgot and Necker were made ministers of finance, but when one proposed to tax all property, and the other to retrench in the matter of salaries, sinecures and pluralities, the clamor of the nobility and the clergy drove them from office.

The assembly of notables was convened. This body had not assembled since the ministry of Richelieu. In 1627 the great cardinal had convened it in order to secure the support of the French people in his struggle against Rome. It was composed of clergymen and nobles. The appalling figures were presented to it. Its members could see that every function of the government was in the languor of dissolution, and yet they rejected with execration every proposition of impartial taxation and reform, and then dissolved, leaving as little impression as a shadow upon a rock.

The States General was then assembled—a legislative body composed of nobles, clergymen, and deputies from the people. This body had not met since 1614. The deputies from the people were the majority. Accordingly the idea was conceived by the nobility and the clergy that each order should form a separate legislative body, and thus give to any the power to counteract the measures of either or of both the others. To this the

popular deputies refused to consent. The nobles and clergymen absented themselves from the place of session. The deputies waited twenty-two days, and then threatened to proceed by virtue of their numerical quorum. They were finally joined by one hundred and twenty clergymen. The nobles staid away. The king, asserting a pretended prerogative, attempted to prohibit the organization without the concurrence of the nobles, but the deputies refused to receive his message. They then declared themselves the national assembly, and turned to confront the nobles and the king. This body prepared the constitution of which mention has been made, which the king accepted and then violated. The people now came forth *en masse*, assailed the throne, assailed the assembly, led the royal family captive, and finally the assembly itself was left stranded by the torrent which it could neither control nor float upon.

The constitution provided for a national convention, composed of representatives from all classes, and here, for the first time, we distinctly see in all their power those sanguinary giants, those paradoxes of history, who held out to their cotemporaries and to posterity, in hands red with the blood of the innocents, the great and irrepeatable charters of the inalienable rights of man. During the sessions of the assembly, two typical agencies, antagonistic from the beginning, had

appeared in France. Of these one rises to the view endowed with the ineffable charms of youth, which never grew to age; of genius, cut down untimely like a flower in all its fragrance; of eloquence, which expressed itself in poetic prophecy in prison cells and on scaffolds; of man's chivalrous courage and woman's self-denying and eternal love, ended prematurely in this world, and looking to immortality for its renewal and never-ending continuance; of a united death, when all the virtue and glory of France seemed to go down into darkness. These were the Girondists. They tempered the radicalism of youth with the conservatism of learning. They urged the constitution, and were faithful to the constitutional monarchy until they became convinced that the king had betrayed both. They lived long enough to know that states cannot be destroyed and rebuilt in a day without incidental retribution worked by the wrongs of centuries. They made a beautiful statue: enamored of their work, they breathed into it the breath of life until it became a living soul, and it then rose up in malignancy and destroyed them. They were great men and lovely women. But this greatness left no enduring imprint, and this loveliness is preserved only in memorials of sorrow. Over the indistinguishable graves into which they were cast, history and poetry chant no triumphant odes, but wail in tones

of inconsolable lamentation. The other party stands forth with all the distinctness of success. Whoever looks through the portals of the present century into the last ten years of its predecessor sees the Jacobins with terrifying distinctness: sees Robespierre's cruel face, himself so neat and incorruptible, sacrificing friend and foe to a sentiment, and doing so without a particle of rage or compunction: sees Marat's awful face, and the knife of Charlotte Corday seeking his wicked heart: sees Danton's colossal form, and hears the eruptions of that volcanic soul throwing ashes and flames until it sinks down into nothingness in its own exhausted crater.

The Jacobins were a political club. Their ascendancy over the mob of Paris was complete. At their instigation, the royal palace was sacked; the queen was driven from her bed by prostitutes; the king was led captive to Paris, preceded by the heads of his guards carried on poles, and surrounded by a ravening, howling mob. The club resolved what decrees ought to pass. They were drafted and sent to the convention through the Commune. Remonstrance was in vain. The galleries and floors were invaded. The hand of the mob was ever upon the rope of the great bell whose alarm had summoned the mob which had outraged the king and queen, and which would, without compunction, annihilate a refractory assembly.

It was this club and its chapters throughout France which finally preponderated in the convention by a decisive majority.

In September, 1792, the convention abolished the monarchy and established a republic.

That evening the Girondists met in the parlors of Madame Roland. She was then in all the glory of that wonderful physical and intellectual beauty which compelled the love of men and made her seem to them the incarnation of the liberty for which they had striven so long. She scattered rose leaves upon the wine in which the perpetuity of the republic was drunk, little heeding the warning which came from Vergniaud's prophetic soul that it was a libation to their own death.

Let us now, after the lapse of a century, consider this woman as history has presented her, and as she has portrayed herself.

Marie-Jeanne Phlipon, for this was her maiden name, was born in Paris in the year 1754. Her father was an engraver. The daughter does not delineate him in her memoirs with such completeness as she has sketched her mother, but we can infer from the fleeting glimpses which she gives of him that he was a man of very considerable intellectual and physical force, but also of most irregular tendencies, which in his later years debased him to serious immoralities. He was a superior workman, discontented with his lot. He

sought to better it by speculative operations outside his vocation. As his daughter expresses it, "he went in pursuit of riches, and met with ruin on his way." She also remarks of him, "that he could not be said to be a good man, but he had a great deal of what is called honor."

Her mother was evidently an angelic woman. Many passages in the memoirs indicate that she possessed uncommon intellectual endowments, but so exceeding were her virtues, that when her face rose to the daughter's view in the night of after years, and gazed compassionately on her through prison bars, the daughter, writing in the shadow of death, presents her in the light only of purest, noblest womanhood.

Marie was so precocious that she could not remember when she was unable to read. The first book she remembered reading was the Old and New Testament. Her early religious teaching was most sufficient, and was submitted to by a mind which, although practical and realistic, was always devout and somewhat affected by mystical, vague and enthusiastic tendencies. She was a prodigy in the catechism, and was an agent of terror to the excellent priest who taught her and the other children, for she frequently confounded him in open class by questions which have vexed persons of maturest years. She was taught the harp, the piano, the guitar and the

violin. She was proficient in dancing. Such was her astonishing aptitude in all studies that she says, "I had not a single master who did not appear as much flattered by teaching me as I was grateful for being taught; nor one who, after attending me for a year or two, was not the first to say that his instructions were no longer necessary." It was her habit in childhood, after she had read any book, to lay it aside and reconstruct its contents by the processes of a most powerful memory, and while doing so, to meditate upon, analyze and debate with it in the severest spirit of criticism and controversy.

When nine years of age she was reading Appian, the romances of Scarron, which disgusted and did not taint her; the memoirs of De Païtes and of Madame de Montpensier. She mastered a treatise on heraldry so thoroughly that she corrected her father one day when she saw him engraving a seal inconformably to some minor rule of that art. She essayed a book on contracts, but it did not entice her to a complete perusal.

She took great delight in Plutarch, which she often carried to church instead of her missal. She read the *Candide* of Voltaire, Fenelon on the education of girls, and Locke on that of children. During all this time her mind was troubled by those unanswerable and saddening reflections upon those recondite theological subjects which

often torture such children, and which grown up people are too often so forgetful of their own childhood that they fail to sympathize with them. She regarded with disapproval the transformation of the Devil into a serpent, and thought it cruel in God to permit it. Referring to the time when her first communion drew near, she writes: "I felt a sacred terror take possession of my soul."

She became profoundly humble and inexpressibly timid. As she grew older she learned that she was to live in a world of errors, sorrows and sins, and the mere knowledge of their existence by some peculiar process of her wonderful mind seemed to be the signal for their combined attack upon her soul. She watched her thoughts until forbidden topics were generated in her mind by the very act of watchfulness. She then regarded herself as an accomplice with every profane image which invaded her innocent imagination. She subjected herself to physical mortifications and austerities of a whimsical yet severe character. She aspired to the fate of holy women of old, who had suffered martyrdom, and she finally resolved to enter a convent. She was then eleven years old. She was placed in such an institution ostensibly for further education, but with the intention on her part there to always remain. It was like entering the vestibule of heaven. She records of her first night there: "I lifted up my eyes to the



heavens; they were unclouded and serene; I imagined that I felt the presence of the Deity smiling on my sacrifice, and already offering me a reward in the consolatory peace of a celestial abode."

She was always an acute observer and a caustic commentator, and she soon discovered that the cloister is not necessarily a celestial abode, and that its inmates do not inevitably enjoy consolatory peace. She found feminine spite there of the same texture with that wreaked by worldly women upon each other, and she notes the cruel taunts which good, old, ugly and learned sister Sophia received from some stupid nuns, who, she says, "were fond of exposing her defects because they did not possess her talents." But her devotional fervor did not abate. She fainted under the feeling of awe in the act of her first communion, for she literally believed that her lips touched the very substance of her God, and thereafter she was long brooded over by that perfect peace which passeth understanding.

She remained there a year, when her destiny was changed by some domestic events which made her services necessary to her parents, and she returned home. Her resolution was unchanged, and she read and meditated deeply upon the *Philotee* of Saint Francis de Sales, upon the manual of Saint Augustine, and upon the polemical writings of Bossuet. But by this time the leaven of

dissent began to work in that powerful intellect, for she remarks upon these works, that "favorable as they are to the cause which they defended, they sometimes let me into the secret of objections which might be made to it, and set me to scrutinizing the articles of my faith;" and she states that "this was the first step towards a skepticism at which I was destined to arrive after having been successively Jansenist, Cartesian, Stoic and Deist." By this skepticism she doubtless meant merely skepticism as to creeds, for in her memoirs, written in daily expectation of death, and in most intense self-communion, she writes upon the great subjects of immortality, Deity and providence in language of astonishing eloquence. "Can," she writes, "Can the sublime idea of a Divine Creator, whose providence watches over the world, the immateriality of the soul and its immortality, that consolatory hope of persecuted virtue, be nothing more than amiable and splendid chimeras? But in how much obscurity are these difficult problems involved? What accumulated objections arise when we wish to examine them with mathematical rigor? No! it is not given to the human mind to behold these truths in the full day of perfect evidence; but why should the man of sensibility repine at not being able to demonstrate what he feels to be true? In the silence of the closet and the dryness of discussion, I can agree

with the atheist or the materialist as to the insolubility of certain questions; but in the contemplation of nature my soul soars aloft to the vivifying principle which animates it, to the intellect which pervades it, and to the goodness which makes it so glorious. Now, when immense walls separate me from all I love, when all the evils of society have fallen upon us together, as if to punish us for having desired its greatest blessings, I see beyond the limits of life the reward of our sacrifices. How, in what manner, I cannot say. I only feel that so it ought to be."

She read incongruously. Condillac, Voltaire, the Lives of the Fathers, Descartes, Saint Jerome, Don Quixote, Pascal, Montesquieu, Burlamaqui, and the French dramatists, were read, annotated and commented on. She gives an appalling list of obsolete devotional books, which she borrowed of a pious abbe, and returned with marginal notes which shocked him. She read the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, Diderot, D'Alembert, Raynal, Holbach, and took delight in the Epistles of Saint Paul. She was, while studying Malebranche and Descartes, so convinced, that she considered her kitten, when it mewed, merely a piece of mechanism in the exercise of its functions. The chilling negations and arid skepticism of Helvetius shocked her, and she writes: "I felt myself possessed of a generosity of soul of which

he denied the existence." She concluded at this time that a republic is the true form of government, and that every other form is in derogation of man's natural rights.

She mastered Clairaut's geometry by copying the book, plates and all from beginning to end. She read Pufendorf's folio on the law of nature. She learned English, and read the life of Cromwell. She read the great French preachers, Bossuet, Flechier, Bourdaloue and Massillon. She was vexed by the terrorism of their arguments. She thought that they overrated the importance of the devil. She did not believe him to be as powerful as they feared. She thought that they might teach oftener what seemed to her the potent element of christian faith—love—and leave the devil out sometimes, and so she herself, wrote a sermon on brotherly love, with which that personage had nothing to do, and in which his name was not even mentioned. She also read the protestant preachers—Blair especially. She entangled herself in the acute skepticism of Bayle.

She seemed possessed of one of those assimilative intellects which extract by glances the substance from a book as the flash of lightning demagnetizes the loadstone. Her acquisitions were consequently immense. Though very yielding in the grasp of the mighty thinkers whom she encountered, yet she read them

in the spirit of criticism, controversy and dissent.

She was, nevertheless, the farthest in the world from becoming a literary dragon. All this did not impair the freshness of girlhood. She was meek and pure. Passages in her autobiography, which I cannot repeat, yet which ought to be read, establish this. She was throughout entirely domestic. She did the marketing; cooked the food; nursed her mother; kept a sharp eye on the apprentices; nearly fell in love, for when the young painter, Taborel, who was twenty, and blushed like a girl, visited her father's workshop, she always had a crayon or something else to seek there, but at the sight of him ran away trembling, without saying a word.

It was not difficult for her to be both scholar and housewife. Writing in after years, of domestic cares, she says: "I never could comprehend how the attention of a woman who possesses method and activity can be engrossed by them.

\* \* Nothing is wanting but a proper distribution of employments, and a small share of vigilance.

\* \* People who know how to employ themselves always find leisure moments, while those who do nothing are in want of time for anything.

\* \* I think that a wife should keep the linen and clothes in order, or cause them to be so kept; nurse her children; give directions concerning

the cookery, or superintend it herself, but without saying a word about it, and with such command of her temper, and such management of her time, as may leave her the means of talking of other matters, and of pleasing no less by her good humor than by the graces natural to her sex. \* \* It is nearly the same in the government of states as of families. Those famous housewives who are always expatiating on their labors, are sure either to leave much in arrears, or to render themselves tiresome to every one around them; and in like manner, those men in power so talkative and so full of business, only make a mighty bustle about the difficulties they are in because too awkward or ignorant to remove them."

An acquaintance which one of her uncles, who was an ecclesiastic, had with an upper servant of the royal household, enabled her to spend some days at the palace of Versailles. She was lodged with the servants, and enjoyed the servant's privilege of seeing everything and sparing nothing. Royalty was never put in the focus of eyes so critical. Her comments upon this visit are very brief. She expresses her detestation of what she saw, saying, "it gives me the feeling of injustice, and obliges me every moment to contemplate absurdity."

The studies and experiences which have been described bring us to her fifteenth year. She

was then a beautiful woman. In her memoirs she declines to state how she looked when a child, saying that she knows a better time for such a sketch. In describing herself at fifteen, she says: "I was five feet four inches tall; my leg was shapely; my hips high and prominent; my chest broad and nobly decorated; my shoulders flat; \* \* my face had nothing striking in it except a great deal of color, and much softness and expression; my mouth is a little too wide—you may see prettier every day—but you will see none with a smile more tender and engaging; my eyes are not very large; the color of the iris is hazel; my hair is dark brown; my nose gave me some uneasiness; I thought it a little too flat at the end. \* \* It is only since my beauty has faded that I have known what it has been in its bloom. I was then unconscious of its value, which was probably augmented by my ignorance."

That she understated her personal charms, the concurrent admiration of cotemporary men and women fully attests. Her physical beauty was marvellous, and when great men were subjected to its influence, to the imperial functions of her intellect, and to the persuasions of an organization exceedingly spiritual and magnetic, it is no wonder that her influence, domestic woman, housewife, as she always was, became so effectual over them.

Let me here warn my hearers not to forestall this woman in their judgments. She was not a manlike female. No better wife ever guided her husband anonymously by her intuitions, or assisted him by her learning. In the farm house and in the palace she was as wifely and retiring as any of the excellent women who have been the wives of American statesmen. Everyone knew her abilities and her stupendous acquirements, and she felt them herself, but, notwithstanding, she never would consent to write a line for publication and avow it as her own, and never did, until that time when her husband was an outlaw, when her child was torn from her, when she herself stood in the shadow of the guillotine, and writhed under the foulest written and spoken calumnies that can torture outraged womanhood into eloquence. She then wrote, in twenty-six days, her immortal Appeal to Posterity, and those stirring letters and papers incident to her defence, from which some extracts have been here presented. She was mistress of a faultless style. Her command over the resources of her language was despotic. She could give to French prose an Italian rhythmus. She had wit and imagination—a reasoning imagination. She was erudite. Probably no woman ever lived better entitled to a high position in literature. But she never claimed it. She holds it now only as a collateral result of her



defence in the struggle in which her life was the stake, and in which she lost. She says: "Never, however, did I feel the smallest temptation to become an author. I perceived at a very early period that a woman who acquires this title loses far more than she gains. She forfeits the affections of the male sex, and provokes the criticisms of her own. If her works be bad, she is ridiculed, and not without reason; if good, her right to them is disputed; or if envy be forced to acknowledge the best part to be her own, her character, her morals, her conduct and her talents are scrutinized in such a manner that the reputation of her genius is fully counterbalanced by the publicity given to her defects. Besides my happiness was my chief concern, and I never saw the public intermeddle with that of any one without marring it. \* \* During twelve years of my life I shared in my husband's labors as I participated in his repasts, because one was as natural to me as the other. If any part of his works happened to be quoted in which particular graces of style were discovered, or if a flattering reception was given to any of the academic trifles, which he took a pleasure in transmitting to the learned societies, of which he was a member, I partook of his satisfaction without reminding him that it was my own composition. \* \* If during his administration an occasion occurred for the

expression of great and striking truths, I poured forth my whole soul upon the paper, and it was but natural that its effusions should be preferable to the laborious teemings of a secretary's brain. I loved my country. I was an enthusiast in the cause of liberty. I was unacquainted with any interest or any passions that could enter into competition with that enthusiasm; my language, consequently, could not but be pure and pathetic, as it was that of the heart and of truth. \* \*

Why should not a woman act as secretary to her husband without depriving him of any portion of his merit? It is well known that ministers cannot do everything themselves; and, surely, if the wives of those of the old governments, or even of the new, had been capable of making draughts of letters, of official dispatches, or of proclamations, their time would have been better employed than in intriguing first for one paramour and then for another." "An old coxcomb, enamored of himself, and vain of displaying the slender stock of science he has been so long in acquiring, might be in the habit of seeing me ten years together without suspecting that I could do more than cast up a bill or cut out a shirt."

Suitors, she writes, came numerously from her fifteenth year. She marches them off *en masse* in her memoirs. As is the custom in France, the first overture was made to her father, and usually

by letter. Her music teacher was her first devotee. He was followed by her dancing master, who, as a propitiatory preparation, had a wen cut out of his cheek; then came a wealthy butcher; then a man of rank; then a dissolute physician, from marrying whom she narrowly escaped; then a jeweler, and many others. The merits of these gentlemen—particularly those of the energetic butcher—were warmly commended by their female friends, who, in France, are brokers in this business on a very extensive scale. It is a unique proof of her ascendancy over every person near her that the letters which her father received, requesting his permission to address her, were submitted by him to her to draft the answer he was to send. So she placed herself *loco parentis*, and wrote the most paternal letters of refusal; all of which her father dutifully copied and sent with many a pang when she let riches and rank pass by her. The suitors were dismissed, one and all, and she resumed her books and studies.

Her mother died in 1775. She became the mistress of the house. Her father formed disreputable connections. Late in that year her future husband, Roland de la Platiere, presented himself, with a letter from a friend of her girlhood. He was forty years old; he was a student; his form was awkward and his manners were stiff; his morals were irreproachable, his disposition was

exacting but his ability was great. He was capable of instructing even her on many subjects, and they became well acquainted by the elective sympathy of scholarship. She became the critic and depositary of his manuscripts. Finally, one day, after asking leave, in her father's presence the worthy man actually kissed her, on his departure for Italy. Her father, sinking lower and lower, squandered her little fortune of about three thousand dollars, wasted his own business, and then treated her with brutality. Her only amusement at this time was playing the violin, accompanied by an old priest who tortured a bass viol, while her uncle made a flute complain.

Finally, after an acquaintance of five years,\* Roland, by letter to her father, proposed marriage. The purity of Roland's life was esteemed by Phlipon such a reproach to his own dissoluteness that he revenged himself by an insulting refusal. He then made his daughter's life at home so insupportable that she took lodgings in a convent. She was visited there by Roland, and they were finally married, without again consulting her father. During the year next succeeding their marriage they remained at Paris. From Paris they went to Amiens, and lived there four years, where her daughter was born. She assisted her husband in the preparation of several statistical

and scientific articles for the *Encyclopedie*. She made a *hortus siccus* of the plants of Picardy.

In 1784 they removed to the family estate of Roland at Villefranche, near Lyons. She had, in the course of her studies, acquired considerable knowledge of medicine. There was no physician in that little community, and she became the village doctor. Some of her experiences were quite whimsical. A countrywoman came several leagues, and offered her a horse if she would save the life of her husband, whom a physician had given up to die. She visited the sick man, and he recovered, but she had great difficulty in resisting the importunities of his wife that she should take the horse.

In 1784 they went to England, and in 1787 they made the tour of Switzerland. Roland was elected member of the constitutional assembly from Lyons, and they went to Paris.

I am compelled now to pass from the uneventful first ten years of her married life with the single remark that, through them all, she was the devoted wife and mother, the kind neighbor and most assiduous student. But her mind bore, as on a mirror, prophetic, shadowy and pictured glimpses of those awful events which were marching out of futurity towards France. Her letters, written during this period, show that she gazed upon them with a prescient eye, and heard with keenest ear

the alarm of the legions which were gathering for attack. The young men of Lyons, where she and her husband spent the winters, gathered in her parlors, and heard from the lips of this impassioned seeress of liberty words which, in such formative periods of a nation's life, hasten events with a power that seems like absolute physical force.

Her husband was chosen a member of the national assembly, and she went with him again to Paris, in 1791.

Here ends the peaceful period of her life. Here close upon her forever the doors of home; and here open to her the doors of history, which too often admits its guests only to immolate them in splendid chambers, as it immolated her. From this time we miss the pure womanliness of her character, in which she is so lovely, and see her imperial beauty and her regal intellect in all their autocratic power, until that time when her husband, home, child, power and hope were all forever gone, and her womanhood again shone out, like a mellow and beauteous sunset, when life's day drew near its close.

Nothing had become more certain than that the monarchy would undergo radical constitutional changes. Of this every one was conscious except the king and the nobility. They were struck with that blindness which foreruns ruin. They constituted one party, and this party was the common

object of attack by two political and revolutionary divisions, the Girondists and the Jacobins. The Gironde wished reform, a constitution, a monarchy, but one limited and constitutional, equality in taxes. They did not wish to destroy utterly, but they were willing to dislocate and then readjust the machinery of state. The Jacobins at first said much, but proposed little. They aspired to the abolition of the throne and the establishment of a republic; they wished to overthrow the altar; they promised, vaguely, to wreak upon the rich and titled full revenge for the wrongs of the poor and lowly. Every political and social dream which had found expression for twenty years, every skeptical attack upon things ancient and holy, found in this body of men a party and an exponent. Up to a certain point both of these parties necessarily made common war upon the old order of things. But, beyond that point, it was equally certain that they would attack each other. The Girondists would wish to stop, and the Jacobins would wish to go on.

During the session of this assembly the influence of Madame Roland on men of all modes of thought became most marked. Her parlors were the rendezvous of eminent men, and men destined to become eminent. It is impossible to discover, from the carping records of that time, that she asserted her powers by any unwomanly effort. Men felt in

her presence that they were before a great intellectual being—a creative and inspiring mind—and it shone upon them without effort, like the sun. Among these visitors was Maximilien Robespierre, who afterwards took her life. He was then obscure, despised, and had been coughed down when he rose to speak. She discerned his talents, and encouraged him. He said little, but was always near her, listening to all she said; and, in his after days of power, he reproduced, in many a speech, what he had heard this wondrous woman say. In this time of his unpopularity she unquestionably saved him from the guillotine by her own personal and persistent intercession with men in power.

By the time that the session of this assembly drew near its close the ground swell began to be felt of that tempest of popular wrath which eventually swept over France, and which the Jacobins rode and directed until it dashed even them upon the rocks. Squalor came forth and consorted with cleanliness; vice crept from its dens and sat down by the side of purity in high places; atheism took its stand at the altar, and ministered with the priest.

This assembly adjourned, and the Rolands returned, for a short time, to Platiere. By this time it was evident that the monarchy could not stand against the attacks of both its enemies; the



king 'was compelled to yield; he threw himself into the arms of the Girondists, as his least obnoxious foes. He formed a new cabinet, and to Roland was given the ministry of the Interior. It was a very great office. Its incumbent had administrative charge of all the internal affairs of France. The engraver's daughter was now the mistress of a palace. From the lowly room where she had read Plutarch until her mind was made grand with ideas of patriotic glory, until she loved her country as once she loved her God, she had gone by no base degrees to an eminence where her beloved France, with all its hopes and woes and needs and resources, lay like a map beneath her—a map for her and hers to change.

By this time the titled refugees had brought the Prussian armies to the frontier; a majority of the clergy had identified themselves with the reaction, were breaking down the revolution among the people, and were producing a reversionary tendency to absolutism. The king was vacillating and timid, but the queen had all the spirit and courage of her mother, Maria Theresa. It is very evident, from Madame Roland's memoirs and letters, that these two women felt that they were in actual collision. It is a strange contrast: the sceptered wife, looking from her high places with longing and regret over centuries of hereditary succession, divine right and unquestioned prerogative, calling on her

house of Hapsburg for aid, appealing to the kings of the earth for assistance in moving back the irreversible march of destiny:—from another palace the daughter of the people looking not back, but forward, speaking of kings and monarchies as gone, or soon to go, into tables of chronology, listening to what the ancient centuries speak from Grecian and Roman tombs, summoning old philosophies to attest the inalienable rights of man, looking beyond the mobs of kings and lords to the great nation-forming people upon which these float and pass away like the shadows of purple summer clouds; and stranger, still, the ending of the contrast in the identification of these typical women in their death, both going to the same scaffold, discrowned of all their hopes. Of all the lessons which time has taught to ambition, none are more touching than when it points to the figures of these women as they are hurried by the procession in which they moved to a common fate.

The ministry insisted that the king should proclaim war against those who were threatening invasion, and that he should proceed stringently against the unpatriotic clergy. He refused to take either course against his ancient friends. It was at this time that Madame Roland wrote to the king in advocacy of those measures, that celebrated letter which her husband signed, and to which all of the ministers assented. It is a most

statesmanlike appeal for the nation. It is predictive of all the woes which followed. No Hebrew prophet ever spoke bolder to his king. She writes: "I know that the words of truth are seldom welcome at the foot of thrones; I know that it is the withholding truth from the councils of kings that renders revolution necessary."

The king, instead of adopting the policy recommended, dismissed his ministers. The letter was then made public through the newspapers. Few state papers have ever produced such an effect. It became a popular argument, and the people demanded the restoration of the ministry for the reasons which it contained, and for expressing which the ministry had been dismissed.

While the Girondists were supporting the ministry of their choice, they, with the king, were the object of furious attacks by the Jacobins. When the ministry was dismissed the Gironde renewed its attacks upon the monarchy, emulated the Jacobins in the severity of its assaults, and began to conspire for a federative republic, similar to the United States, which to Madame Roland was the ideal of a free government.

Madame Roland went from the palace to hired lodgings, and in the temporary fusion which followed of the revolutionists of all parties, the most eminent leaders gathered around her again. Robespierre came, but said little, for he was wait-

ing his hour. Danton laid his lion mane in her lap, all his savagery for the moment tamed. Vergniaud, Buzot, and all the chiefs of the Gironde, gathered around this oracle of liberty. Anarchy supervened. Paris and all France were filled with riotings and murder. The king finally declared war, but battles went against France. Riot and murder increased. A mob of twenty thousand invaded the Tuileries then occupied by the royal family. It was divided into three divisions. The first was composed of armed and disciplined men, led by Santerre. The male ruffians of Paris, blood-thirsty and atrocious beyond anything that civilization has ever produced, formed the second division. The third, most terrible of all, was composed of the lost women of Paris, led by Theroigne de Mericourt, clad in a blood-red riding dress, and armed with sword and pistol. This notorious woman had acted a prominent part in former scenes. She led the attack upon the Bastille. She led the mob which brought the king from Versailles to Paris. In the subsequent riots life and death hung upon her nod, and in one of them she met her betrayer. He begged piteously for her pardon and his life, and this was her answer, if we believe Lamartine: "My pardon!" said she, "at what price can you buy it? My innocence gone, my family lost to me, my brothers and

sisters pursued in their own country by the jeers of their kindred: the maledictions of my father: my exile from my native land, my enrollment among courtesans, the blood by which my days have been and will be stained, that imperishable curse of vice linked to my name instead of that immortality of virtue which you once taught me to doubt—it is for this that you would buy my forgiveness—do you know of any price on earth sufficient to purchase it?” And he was massacred. She died forty years afterwards in a mad-house, for in the fate of the revolution, she was stripped and whipped in the streets to madness by the very women she had led.

These loathsome cohorts forced their way into the palace. They invaded the rooms of the king and queen. They struck at him with pikes, and forced upon his head the red bonnet of the Jacobins, while the most wretched of her sex encircled the queen with a living wall of vice, and loaded her with obscene execrations, charges and epithets.

Although this outbreak has been charged to both the great political parties, it is probaly nearer to truth to say that it originated spontaneously with that demoniac mob soon to rule France, and which from this time carried all political organizations with it. The Girondists, however, still retained enough of their constitutional conserva-

tism to be the only hope which royalty could have for its preservation. The king again threw himself into their arms. Roland was reinstated in his ministry, and the palace again received his wife.

Then every revolutionary element began at once to combine against the king and the party which was thus supporting him. It was soon apparent that the king and the Girondists could neither govern the country nor save themselves if they acted together. The Gironde, from about this time, pusillanimously conceded point by point to the anarchic demands made by their enemies and the king's. Madame Roland did not join them in this, but when she saw that her husband was but a minister in name, that he and his associates were powerless to punish murder and prevent anarchy, doubtless the vision which she had seen of a people regenerated and free began to fade away. The Gironde consented to the imprisonment of the royal family in the Temple. This was not concession enough. The Jacobins, with the mob at their back, accused them not only of lack of works, but of lack of faith, and when such an accusation against a party becomes the expression of a popular conviction, that party has nothing to do except to die. To prove this charge untrue, the Gironde united with their enemies in abolishing the monarchy and establishing a republic.

Madame Roland drew up a plan for a republic, but it was too late for such a one as she desired. Her scheme was federative, like our own, in which the provinces of France should have the status of states. This plan was a blow at the mob of Paris, which, through the Jacobin clubs, with which France was thickly sown, controlled the nation. The republic which followed was such only in name. The mob of Paris now stepped from behind the transparent screen, whence it had moved all parties like wire-hung puppets, and stood disclosed before the world in all its colossal horror, stained with blood, breathing flames, and grasped directly the springs of power. The national assembly was like a keeper of lunatics captured by his patients. Its members were crowded in their seats by blood-thirsty men, depraved women, and by merciless visionaries, who clamored for extirpation and destruction, absolute and universal.

The power of Roland as a minister became as feeble as a shadow's hand. The blade of the guillotine rose and fell automatically. Thousands fled from the city upon which heaven itself seemed to rain fire and plagues. The armies of foreign kings were upon the soil of France, and were fast advancing, and the wild rumors of their coming roused the people to panic, and frenzied resolutions of resistance and retribution. Thousands,

whose only crime was a suspected want of sympathy, were crowded into the prisons of Paris. Hoary age, the bounding boy, the tender virgin, the loving wife, the holy priest, the sainted nun, the titled lady, filed along with the depraved of both sexes in endless procession through those massive gates, never more to see the sky and the green earth again. For the mob had resolved to extirpate its enemies in the city before marching against foreign invaders. It went from prison to prison, bursting in the doors, and slaughtering without distinction of age, sex or condition. Madame Roland was nearly frantic over these scenes. Her divinity had turned to Moloch in her very presence. Her husband called for troops to stop the horrible massacre, but none were furnished, and it went on until men were too tired to slay. These acts were doubtless incited by the Jacobin leaders, though they cloaked with secrecy their complicity in these great crimes. The Jacobins became all-powerful. The Girondists became the party of the past, and from this time their history is a record of a party in name, but in such act of dissolution as to make its efforts spasmodic, clique-like and personal; sometimes grand, sometimes cruel, and often cowardly. They were under the coercion of public opinion, but were dragged instead of driven by it. They frequently held back, but this was merely a halt,



which accelerated the rapidity of the march which left them at the scaffold, where they regained their heroism in the presence of death, while the bloody mob went on to a similar ending a little distance beyond.

When the lull came, after the massacre, the two parties stood looking at each other across the river of blood. The Jacobins accused the Girondists of being enemies of the country. It is characteristic of revolutionary times to accuse vaguely, and to punish severely. Socrates died as an alleged corrupter of youth. Pilate, after acquitting Jesus of the crime of high treason, suffered him to be executed for "teaching throughout all Jewry." "Roundhead" and "Cavalier" were once expressive terms of condemnation. In our own times the words "slaveholder," "abolitionist," "loyal," "disloyal" and "rebel" have formed the compendious summing up of years of history. An indictment is compressed into an epithet in such times. In the time of Madame Roland, to be "a suspect" was to be punishable with death. So the Jacobins suspected the Girondists and accused them of being enemies of France. They introduced measures which pandered to the bloodthirst of the mob, and for which the Girondists were compelled either to vote or to draw upon themselves its vengeance. Madame Roland urged and entreated the Girondists to make one last struggle

for law, liberty and order, by moving to bring to justice the ringleaders in the massacre, including the Jacobin chiefs, who instigated it. This issue was made in the assembly, but it was voted down before the tiger roar of the mob which raged in the hall. The Jacobins resolved to destroy Madame Roland, whose courage had prompted this attack upon them, and for which she had become the object of their intensest hate. They suborned an adventurer named Viard to accuse her of being privy to a correspondence with the English government for the purpose of saving the life of the king. She was summoned before the assembly to confront her accuser. She appeared in the midst of her enemies, armed with innocence, resplendent with beauty, defended by her own genius. Her very presence extorted applause from reluctant lips. She looked upon her accuser, and he faltered. By a few womanly words she tore his calumny into shreds, and left amid plaudits. Justice thus returned once more to illumine that place by a fleeting gleam, and then with this woman left it forever.

The Jacobins pressed the trial of the king. The mob demanded him as a victim. The Girondists voted with the Jacobins that he was guilty; but they voted to leave the sentence to the determination of the French people, and when they were defeated in this they voted for his death. I

am unable to find anything in the memorials of Madame Roland which shows that she had any sympathy with this. What is written tends rather to show that she was in the very apathy and lassitude of horror. From the time when her courageous effort to work justice upon the abettors and perpetrators of the massacre failed, her history ceases to be political and becomes personal.

The revolutionary tribunal was reorganized, consisting of twenty judges, a jury and a public accuser. Merlin of Douai, a consummate jurist, proposed a statute, in every line of which, suspicion, treachery and hate found an arsenal of revenge. It provided that, "immediately after the publication of this present decree, all suspected persons, who are found in the territory of the republic, and who are still at liberty, shall be arrested.

"Are deemed suspected all persons who by their conduct, writings or language have proved themselves partisans of tyranny, federalism and enemies of liberty;

"Those who cannot prove they possess the means of existence, and that they have fully performed all of their duties as citizens;

"Those to whom certificates of citizenship have been refused;

"Those of noble families—fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, husbands, wives and

agents—who have not constantly manifested their attachment to the Revolution.”

The traveller, standing upon the stone seats of the Flavian amphitheatre, looks down into the arena, and peoples the Colosseum with the criminals, and the innocent martyrs, shut out from hope by its merciless walls, and by a populace more merciless, and slain by thousands by wild beasts and swordsmen and spearsmen, to make a Roman holiday. How complacently he felicitates himself upon the assumption that modern times present nothing like this. But less than one hundred years ago, the pen of a lawyer erected in France a statute which enclosed a kingdom with its architectural horror, made one arena of an empire, and in one year drank up more blood than sank into the sands of the Colosseum in centuries.

The revolutionary tribunal was in permanent session. Its trials were summary. It heard with predetermination, and decided without evidence. It was the mere routine formality of death. Proof often consisted solely in the identification of the person whose death had been predetermined. Prostitutes sold acquittals, and revenged themselves by convictions. Paris now ruled France, the Jacobins ruled Paris, and the mob ruled the Jacobins. They had pressed the Girondists, those men of lofty genius and superb eloquence, from

their high position into complicity with crimes with which they had no sympathy, and this want of sympathy now became their crime. —It was resolved to destroy them. The mob of Paris again came forth. Devilish men and women again crowded the assembly, and even took part in its deliberations. The act of accusation was passed, and twenty-six of the leaders of the Gironde went from their places to the scaffold, where they suffered death sublimely.

Madame Roland was also arrested. Her husband had fled from Paris. She was consigned to the prison of Saint Pelagie, and afterwards, after suffering the cruel mockery of a release, she was imprisoned in the Conciergerie. This prison was the abiding place of assassins, thieves, and all impurity. It was the ante-room to the scaffold, for incarceration there was an infallible symptom of death. The inmates were crowded into rooms with merciless disregard of their relative characters or antecedents. Madame Roland was first associated with the duchess of Grammont, with a female pick-pocket, with a nun, with an insane woman, and with a street-walker. She finally procured a cell to herself, which she made bloom with flowers. The prison was populous with the most degraded of her sex. Yet she asserted here, the same marvellous ascendancy which she had always possessed over her associates. The obscene

outcries of lost women died away when she approached. Her cell was an ark of safety for any dove seeking refuge from that deluge of human sin. When she went into the courtyard the lost of her own sex gathered around her with reverence, as around a tutelary and interceding angel, the same women who inflicted upon Madame Du Barry, that princess of their caste, every torment which the malice of their sex could inspire. Inmates and visitors crowded to the door of her cell, and she spoke to them through its iron bars with eloquence, which increased as inspiring death drew near, of liberty, country, equality, and of better days for France, but when they went away she would look through her window to the sky, and, thinking of her hunted husband and sequestered little daughter, cry and moan like the simplest wife and mother. Then she would send by surreptitious conveyance, letters to refugee statesmen, which discussed the political situation as calmly as if written upon the work-table of a secure and peaceful home. Calumny now busied itself to defile her. Hebert, vilest of editors, flung the ordure of Pere Duchesne, vilest of newspapers, upon this spotless woman, soon to be a saint, and sent the newsmen to cry the disgusting charges under her prison windows, so that she heard them rendered in all the villainies of a language whose under-drains have sources of

vileness filthier than any other speech of man. She did not fear death, but she did fear calumny. She had never delighted in any public display of her enormous intellectual powers, and she had never made any such display. She had fixed the sentiment of Lyons by an anonymous newspaper article, of which sixty thousand copies had been bought in one day. She had written to the king a letter which drove her husband from power, and which, when read by the people, compelled the king to restore him. She had written a despatch to the Pope, claiming rights for certain French in Rome, in which the sanctity of his office and the dignity of her country was respected, appealed to and asserted. It is said that the state papers were her's which persuaded William Pitt to abstain so long from intervention in the affairs of France, in that time of English terror and hope, which furnished arguments to Fox, and which drew from Burke those efforts of massive reason and gorgeous imagination which will endure as long as the language itself. The counsel by which she had disentangled the perplexity of wisest men had been repeated by them to applauding senates in tones less eloquent than those by which they had been received, and triumph had followed. In none of these efforts did she avow herself. She shrank from the honors which solicited her, though the world knew that they came

from her just as the world knows that moon and planets shine with the reflected light of a hidden sun. But now, when thus assailed, she resolved to speak personally and for herself. And so, sitting in her cell, she wrote in concealment and sent out by trusty hands, in centos, that autobiography in which she appealed to posterity, and by which posterity has been convinced. She traced her career from earliest childhood down to the very brink of the grave into which she was looking. Her intellectual, affectional and mental history are all there written with a hand as steady and a mind as serene as though she were at home, with her baby sleeping in its cradle by her side. Here are found history, philosophy, political science, poetry and ethics as they were received and given out again by one of the most receptive and imparting minds ever possessed by woman. She knew that home, husband, child and friends were not for her any more, and that very soon she was to see the last of earth from beside the headsman and from the block, and yet she turned from all regret and fear, and summoned the great assize of posterity, "of foreign nations and the next ages," to do her justice. There was no sign of fear. She looked as calmly on what she knew she must soon undergo as the spirit released into never-ending bliss looks back upon the corporeal trammels which it has just spurned its escape.



There are those who believe that a woman cannot be great as she was and still be pure. These ghouls of history will to the end of time dig into the graves where such queens lie entombed. This woman has slept serenely for nearly a century. Sweet oblivion has dimmed with denial and forgetfulness the obloquy which hunted her in her last days. Tears such as are shed for vestal martyrs have been shed for her, and for all her faults she has the condonation of universal sorrow. Nothing but the evil magic of sympathetic malice can restore these calumnies, and even then they quickly fade away in the sunlight of her life. Nothing can touch her further. Dismiss them with the exorcism of Carlyle, grown strangely tender and elegiac here. "Breathe not thy poison breath! Evil speech! That soul is taintless; clear as the mirror sea." She was brought to trial. The charge against her was, "that there has existed a horrible conspiracy against the unity and indivisibility of the French people; that Marie Jeanne Phlipon, wife of Jean Marie Roland, has been one of the abettors or accomplices of that conspiracy." This was the formula by which this woman was killed, and it simply meant that the Gironde had existed and that she had sympathized with it.

She was racked with interrogations, and returned to the prison, weeping at the infernal imputations which they cast upon her womanhood. On the

day of her final trial she dressed herself in spotless white, and let fall the voluminous masses of her brown, abundant hair. She was asked to betray her husband by disclosing his hiding place. Her answer is full of wifely loyalty and dignity—"Whether I know it or not I neither ought nor will say."

There was absolutely no evidence against her except of her affiliations with the Girondists. The mockery ended by her condemnation to death within twenty-four hours, and this Iphigenia of France went doomed back to her cell. Her return was awaited with dreadful anxiety by her associates in confinement, who hoped against hope for her safe deliverance. As she passed through the massive doors, she smiled, and drew her hand knife-like across her neck, and then there went up a wail from all assembled there, the wail of titled women, of sacred nuns, of magdalens and thieves, a dirge of inconsolable sorrow, of humanity weeping for its best beloved child.

Late in the afternoon of November 8, 1793, the rude cart which was to bear her to the guillotine received her. She was dressed in white; her hair fell like a mantle to her knees. The chilly air and her own courage brought back to her prison-blanced cheek the rosy hues of youth. She spoke words of divine patience to the crowd which surged around her on her way and reviled

her. With a few low words she raised the courage of a terror-stricken old man who took with her the same last journey, and made him smile. As the hours wore into twilight, she passed the home of her youth, and perhaps longed to become a little child again and enter there and be at rest. At the foot of the scaffold she asked for pen and paper to bequeath to posterity the thoughts which crowded upon her; they were refused, and thus was one of the books of the sybils lost. She bowed to the great statue of Liberty near by, exclaiming, "*O, Liberte! comme on t'a jouee!*" and gave her majestic form to the headsman to be bound upon the plank.

The knife fell, and the world darkened upon the death of the queenliest woman who ever lived and loved.

## NOTE.

The first edition of the writings of Madame Roland was by Bosc just after the reign of terror. The next was by Champagneux, in 1799. This was followed by that of Berville and Barriere, in 1821.

The original manuscripts seem to have been first in the hands of Bosc, who received them from Madame Roland and relinquished them to Champagneux, who became the husband of her daughter. As they were guarded from inspection, doubt was thrown on their existence, and such historians as Villaurmè and Buchez and Roux declared her writings apocryphal.

But in 1858 the original manuscripts were deposited in the Bibliothèque Imperiale, under the will of the daughter, dated in 1846. These manuscripts are the basis of Dauban's edition of 1864. In his *Etude sur Madame Roland* he seems to have explored every source of information and conjecture, though conjecture has apparently misled him at times.

He presents in *fac simile* five letters without address or signature, which were doubtless written by Madame Roland during her imprisonment, and probably to Buzot, who was then a fugitive. They first came to light in 1860 from an unknown source. As to these letters, the insinuations and conjectures of M. Dauban are exceedingly unpleasant, nor are they at all satisfactory. I have read them with an interest which was at times painful, and remain unshaken in my belief in her goodness. They are a study of a woman's heart, but the woman is Madame Roland, and they must be read by the fierce light of those times, and with an understanding of the broad and deep foundations of her character. They are not such letters as Therese Caharus would have written, and doubtless did write, to Tallien from her prison. There is not a line in them inconsistent with stainless honor, although there is many a line expressive of a hopeless love, so hopeless, because forbidden, that the scaffold, under the shadow of which they were written, was more desired by her than life.

It is generally supposed that her last words were *O, Liberté! que de crimes on commet en ton nom!* They are so stated in all the editions, excepting that of Dauban, who gives them as in the text. In this he is followed by De Mazade in his *Deux Femmes de la Revolution*. The words which are usually attributed to her are undoubtedly taken from the *Memoires d'un Detenu*, written by Honoré Riouffe, who was a prisoner with Madame Roland in the Conciergerie, and saw her pass out to execution. His version of her language is probably the gossip of the prison.

It is difficult to understand precisely what she meant by *O, Liberté! comme on t'a jouée!* It may mean *O, Liberty*, how they have gambled (or squandered) thee away, or what a mockery they have made of thee, or *O, Liberty*, how they have counterfeited thee. Probably the latter is nearest the meaning, for the words were an apostrophe to the colossal, yet fragile, statue of Liberty near by, which, according to Carlyle, was "of plaster, hoping to become of metal."













